

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08503 211218Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 BIB-01 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0814

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FOR EUR/SOV, PA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN, PFOR, SOPN, CSCE, UR, US
SUBJECT: SECOND ORAL PROTEST OVER SOVIET INTERFERENCE WITH
U.S. MEDIA

REF: MOSCOW 8418

1. AS ANTICIPATED IN REFTEL, CBS DID INDEED HAVE PLUG
PULLED WHEN IT ATTEMPTED TO RELAY FILM FOOTAGE ON MCCLELLAN
INCIDENT APRIL 20. DURING SATELLITE FEED IN EARLY HOURS OF
APRIL 21, SOVIET TECHNICIANS PERMITTED TRANSMISSION OF
FOOTAGE ON VANCE-GROMYKO MEETINGS BUT CUT OFF CBS FEED AS
SOON AS MCCLELLAN SEGMENT BEGAN.

2. EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE CALLED AT MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT AT
NOON LOCAL TIME APRIL 21 TO DELIVER SECOND ORAL PROTEST
WITHIN FIFTEEN HOURS OVER SOVIET INTERFERENCE WITH ABILITY
OF U.S. NEWSMEN TO TRANSMIT VISUAL MATERIALS. PRESS
ATTACHE WAS RECEIVED BY MFA/PRESS COUNSELOR BORIS
NIKOLAYEVICH SEDOV, WITH UNNAMED SECOND SECRETARY ACTING AS
NOTE-TAKER. SUBSTANCE OF ORAL PROTEST WAS ESSENTIALLY
IDENTICAL TO THAT DELIVERED ON EVENING OF APRIL 20 (REFTEL),
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WITH OBVIOUS CHANGE OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED. PRESS
ATTACHE NOTED TWICE THAT HE WAS MAKING PROTEST "ON THE
INSTRUCTIONS OF AMBASSADOR TOON AND WITH THE CONCURRANCE
OF SECRETARY VANCE."

3. UNLIKE STRELNIKOV THE NIGHT BEFORE (REFTEL), SEDOV WAS
WELL PREPARED. HE CHARACTERIZED MCCLELLAN INCIDENT AS

"DIRECT PROVOCATION BY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS" AND HE EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT EMBASSY HAD TAKEN "IMPROPER" (NEBLAGOVIDNIY) POSITION IN CHOOSING TO RAISE TO AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL A MATTER BETWEEN MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS (PRESUMABLY CBS AND GOSTELERADIO). APPROACHING AMERICAN POSITION FROM 180-DEGREE OPPOSITE POSITION, SEDOV SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE AMERICAN SIDE HAD ELECTED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF SUCH AN INCIDENT "WHILE SUCH IMPORTANT TALKS ARE TAKING PLACE IN MOSCOW" (IN MAKING INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP PROTESTS, PRESS ATTACHE HAD CITED SAME RATIONALE AS BASIS FOR DEPLORING SOVIET INTERFERENCE WITH NEWSMEN).

4. IN FINAL EXCHANGE, PRESS ATTACHE NOTED THAT EMBASSY'S FIRM PROTEST WAS IRRESPECTIVE OF ANY PARTICULARS OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN FRONT OF EMBASSY ON AFTERNOON OF APRIL 20 AND WAS DIRECTLY AND POINTEDLY LINKED TO SOVIET INTERFERENCE WITH JOURNALISTS' ABILITY TO CARRY OUT THEIR WORK. TOON

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